



City of Rockville

MEMORANDUM

July 8, 2004

TO: City of Rockville Planning Commission

FROM: Scott Parker, AICP, Planner III

VIA: Bob Spalding, AICP, Chief of Planning

SUBJECT: Recommendation to Mayor and Council: Proposed King Farm Concept Plan Amendment to Change the Land Use Plan to Allow for Senior Housing Uses and to Change the Land Use Designation of the 1.5-acre Farmstead House Within the 5.5-acre Homestead Park From "Park" to "Park/Residential/Office"

BACKGROUND

In July of 1996, the Mayor and Council approved Concept Plan Application CPD95-0002, thereby authorizing development of the 430-acre King Farm as a major mixed-use development containing up to 3,100,700 square feet of office space, 3,200 housing units and 125,000 square feet of neighborhood retail space. The tract is in the O-3, Restricted Office Zone, where a Comprehensive Planned Development is a voluntary optional method of development.

The Concept Plan allowed shifting of the office density between the various office development pods. To date, detailed applications have been approved for four office buildings, for a total of approximately 805,992 square feet, including ancillary retail, restaurant and fitness center space. To date, three buildings have been built or are under construction, totaling approximately 560,649 square feet.

The areas that the Concept Plan identifies as office development do not, however, allow for the addition of additional residential units as part of a senior housing use proposal.

There are two requests associated with the Concept Plan amendment. The first is a request by King Farm Associates is related to the incorporation of senior housing uses into the King Farm development. The second request, as outlined below, is by request of the City, and is related to a change in land use designation for the 1.5-acre King Farm farmstead house.

KING FARM PROPOSAL

King Farm Associates has applied for CPD1995-0002B, an amendment to their approved Concept Plan. The subject of the request is to seek approval from the Mayor and Council, after Planning Commission recommendation, to amend the Concept Plan to allow for a senior housing component within the Irvington Centre office development area, in lieu of approximately 1.25 million square feet of office development. The applicant has stated that the senior housing uses would equate to approximately 1.25 million square feet of office in the form of 500 to 600 residential units.

The proposed land uses for this amendment will include three components. The first will be independent senior living. The second will be assisted living, and the third will be that of nursing home uses. Currently, the existing CPD section of the Ordinance allows for the first two components of the proposal, but not the nursing home uses. This component of the proposal is the subject of a text amendment (TXT2004-00211) that is currently being evaluated concurrently by staff and the Mayor and Council. The Planning Commission reviewed the Text Amendment at their meeting of June 23, 2004.

The Concept Plan amendment will be in the form of a change in a defined area of the concept plan's land use plan within Irvington Centre, which is currently designated as "office." The new designation will be "office," with a note on the land use plan exhibit that will state "alternate location for a square footage of 1.2 million square feet of independent living, assisted living and/or nursing home uses, and related recreational and common use facilities" (see attachment).

TRANSPORTATION

King Farm's proposal to reduce office square footage by 1.25 million square feet will lead to a reduction in traffic trips for the King Farm. Residential uses generate significantly less traffic than office uses, and a traffic impact statement for this proposal is attached for review.

In addition, the Chief of Planning approved a Transportation Demand Management Program (TDM) after input was provided from the Planning Commission, as required by the Resolution of Approval for King Farm. As part of the TDM, two shuttles are running through King Farm on a regular basis. These shuttles will serve the senior housing development in addition to the office. In addition, the office parcels identified for change through this amendment are near the proposed Corridor Cities Transitway and a proposed stop along the line. This request will not alter the approved TDM program.

CITY REQUEST FOR FARMSTEAD HOME SITE

On June 1, 2004, the Mayor and Council instructed staff to begin steps to sell the 1.5-acre farmstead house in the 5.5-acre farmstead park for office use, following a recommendation by the King Farm Farmstead Task Force. The task force submitted that the farmstead house is

inappropriate for public use, requiring significant resources and alterations to retrofit it. It should be noted that the task force preferred that the house be sold as a private residence.

Maryland Route 355, Piccard Drive and an automobile sales lot border the 5.5-acre farmstead park site of King Farm, at the northern boundary of the CPD. The entire 5.5-acre farmstead has been designated through the concept plan as a "park" use. The farmstead house property encompasses a 1.5-acre portion of the entire 5.5-acre site. The house is currently occupied.

Currently designated as a park in the approved Concept Plan, the city is utilizing the opportunity of the Concept Plan amendment to change the land use designation of the 1.5-acre farmstead house from "park" to "park/residential/office" in order to facilitate the Mayor and Council's goal of being able to utilize or sell the property. The balance of the five-acre park site will be unaffected by this amendment, and ownership of the house and park by the Mayor and Council will be unchanged by this amendment. No amendment to the Concept Plan is needed, however, to change ownership of the property. The property would go through the standard property disposition process, including the opportunity for public comment.

The Mayor and Council discussed changing the zoning of the property to C-T to ensure that office uses are compatible with the historic residential character. Staff notes that the existing O-3 zoning allows office uses, so no change in zoning is required to allow office. Staff recommends that the zoning remain O-3 with limitations in the Concept Plan. These limitations should include a maximum floor area of 5,500 square feet (existing plus 10% to accommodate minor modifications), use of C-T development standards (particularly parking and signage), the ability of shared parking with the park, limitations on fence styles, and scenic easements.

The intent of these limitations is to maintain the relationship between the house, the barns, out buildings, and the surrounding open space. The proposed land use designation also permits residential use of the house.

The Mayor and Council also indicated that they would seek historic designation of the house in order to maintain its historic residential character. Exterior changes to the house would have to be approved by the HDC. As part of the designation process, the Mayor and Council may want to consider designation of the entire 5.5-acre farmstead to maintain the historic relationship of the site.

RECOMMENDATION, KING FARM PROPOSAL

It is Staff's opinion that the incorporation of a senior housing component within this area of King Farm will complement and enhance the Irvington Centre office development of King Farm, provide a prevalent community need and reduce traffic trips. Staff does recommend, however, that the Resolution specify a range for the number of units. Currently, the proposal is for a one-to-one swap of 1.25 million square feet of office for the same amount of senior housing uses. Staff feels that the proposal needs to be solidified by also providing a maximum number of units

allowed under this change. The applicant has estimated this number at between 500 and 600 units.

RECOMMENDATION, CITY PROPOSAL

With respect to the second item related to the farmstead site, staff supports this part of the amendment as well. Ownership is not changing by virtue of this amendment, but it will give the Mayor and Council the flexibility needed to evaluate further options with the site.

NOTIFICATION:

Notices were sent to approximately 1,275 residences and businesses. As required by the Zoning Ordinance, certified mail was sent to approximately 106 property owners adjacent to the King Farm.

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Attachments:

1. Site Map, Graphic (Senior Housing)
2. Site Map, Aerial (Senior Housing)
3. Land Use Plan (Senior Housing)
4. Traffic Data
5. Site Map 1, Aerial (Farmstead)
6. Site Map 2, Aerial (Farmstead)